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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE

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FOR IOP/M

MONROVIA FOR SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR BLACK

KINSHASA FOR SECRETARY

EO 11652 NA
SUB: MEDIA REPORTING ON KISSINGER-GHANA

1. GHANA MEDIA FINALLY BROKE NEWS OF CANCELLATION OF KISSINGER VISIT IN EARLY AFTERNOON WEDNESDAY OVER RADIO. STORY LATER CARRIED IN EVENING OVER TV MADE NO MENTION OF ACHEAMPONG ILLNESS, CITING MERELY "UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES." NEWS ITEM, STICKING STRICTLY TO GOVERNMENT RELEASE, ALSO DESCRIBED AS "WHOLLY UNFOUNDED" SPECULATION THAT FOREIGN INFLUENCES WERE BEHIND CANCELLATION.

2. BOTH GOVERNMENT-OWNED MORNING NEWSPAPERS THURSDAY GAVE CANCELLATION PRIME PAGE ONE PLAY, WITH /GHANAIAN TIMES/GIVING FULL-PAGE BANNER "KISSINGER'S VISIT CANCELLED" (WITH STORY LIMITED TO SHORT GOVERNMENT STATEMENT) AND /DAILY GRAPHIC/ GIVING STORY FOUR-COLUMNS, "DR. K'S VISIT PUT OFF", WITH
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PICTURE. SOMEWHAT LONGER /GRAPHIC/ STORY EXPLAINS "REAL REASON"

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FOR POSTPONEMENT OF VISIT WAS ILLNESS OF HEAD OF STATE AND POINTS OUT THE CHAIRMAN "HAD NOT BEEN AT WORK SINCE EASTER" AND "AT LEAST ONE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SMC (SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL) HAS BEEN POSTPONED BECAUSE OF THE CHAIRMAN'S INDISPOSITION." /GRAPHIC/ ARTICLE CITES BBC REPORT OF SOVIET PRESSURE AND ADDS: "THIS WAS HIGHLY RESENTED IN ACCRA YESTERDAY." STORY SAYS IT IS KNOWN KISSINGER UNWILLING TO VISIT PLACES WHERE HEAD OF STATE UNAVAILABLE AND CITES THIS AS REASON FOR NOT INCLUDING IVORY COAST ON TOUR " "BECAUSE PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET BOIGNY WAS AWAY ON TOUR."

3. BOTH NEWSPAPERS CARRIED EDITORIALS ALSO, WITH SPECIAL BARBS AT BBC FOR ITS REPORT OF SOVIET PRESSURE.

4. HEADLINED, "A GREAT PITY", GRAPHIC EDITORIAL SAYS CANCELLATION OF TRIP WAS "UNFORTUNATE" AND NOTED "IN OUR VIEW IT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE AFFORDED OUR LEADERS AND DR. KISSINGER AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE IDEAS TO BRING ABOUT MUCH CLOSER UNDERSTANDING ON SOME OF THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE WORLD WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA... DR. KISSINGER'S VISIT TO GHANA AS IN OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES WOULD THEREFORE HAVE PRESENTED TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES." THE GRAPHIC THEN VOICES THE HOPE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES WILL PERMIT A NEW VISIT AT SOME TIME NOT FAR OFF.

5. EDITORIAL CLOSES WITH ATTACK ON BBC BECAUSE OF THE SOVIET PRESSURE REPORT. "THIS IS FAR FROM THE TRUTH AND WHOLLY UNFOUNDED, " SAYS THE /GRAPHIC/, ADDING "THE SPECULATION, TO SAY THE LEAST, SMACKS OF IRRESPONSIBILITY. GHANA IS A SOVEREIGN, INDEPENDENT NATION WHICH IS NON-ALIGNED IN HER FOREIGN POLICY. SHE DOES NOT KOWTOW TO THE WHIMS AND CAPRICES OF ANY NATION--- BIG OR SMALL."

6. LONGER /TIMES/ EDITORIAL TREATS MOSTLY WITH "SPARE US THESE FALSEHOODS", GETTING WOUND-UP AGAINST THE BBC FOR REPORTING THE SOVIET PRESSURE ANGLE. "THE INDISPOSITION OF GHANA'S HEAD OF STATE, WHICH WAS THE TRUE (ALL CAPS) AND REAL CAUSE OF THE CANCELLATION WAS GLOSSED OVER BY THE REPORT THUS CREATING THE UNTRUTHFUL IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA IS UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMUNIST CONTROLLED. WE ARE CONCERNED NOT BECAUSE OF THE COMMUNISTIC INFERENCES BUT BECAUSE THE REPORT IS A COMPLETE FABRICATION."

7. UNDER THE SUBHEAD "NO OBLIGATION," THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES: "GHANA HAS NO OBLIGATION TO SHAPE ITS POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DESTINY AFTER ANY PARTICULAR SYSTEM. IF OUR ACTIONS-POLITICAL, MORAL OR ECONOMIC--- DO NOT CONFORM TO THE

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EXPECTATIONS OF THE WEST, IT IS BECAUSE AFTER OUR DIRECT AND LONG ASSOCIATIONS, WE HAVE GAINED NOTHING BUT DESPAIR, ECONOMIC RAPE, INTRIGUES, ESPIONAGE AND, VERY OFTEN, NATIONAL HUMILIATION.

8. "THERE IS NO COMMUNISM AND NO COMMUNISTS IN GHANA. BUT EVEN IF THERE WERE TO BE ANY, NO SELFLESS, RIGHT-THINKING GHANAIAN NATIONALIST WOULD REGRET IT SO LONG AS IT STAYS USEFUL AND PROMOTES PROGRESS IN SOCIETY."

9. FINALLY, THE /TIMES/ CONCLUDES WITH THE FOLLOWING:

"IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE KISSINGER VISIT WAS CALLED OFF, NO SELF-RESPECTING GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE DONE OTHERWISE. GHANAIANS--THE TRUE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GHANA --KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE THE RIGHT THING AND DESERVES THE APPROBATION OF ALL. BUT PLEASE SPARE US THESE FALSE ACCUSATIONS."

10. NEITHER PAPER CARRIES A SINGLE WORD ON SECRETARY'S VISITS TO LUSAKA OR ZAIRE, BUT BOTH DO CARRY A WIRE SERVICE STORY QUOTING AFRICA MAGAZINE AS SAYING U.S. IS BRINGING PRESSURE ON NIGERIA TO FORCE IT OUT OF OPEC.
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